THE Heathen's Conversion; OR, THE Life of *Jehoshaphat*, The SON of ing *Avernio*, of *Barma* in *India*.

GOOD Christian people, now be pleased to mind,
This pious book, and in it soon you'll find,
vine records shown plainly to our view,
hat miracles our gracious God can do.
The cause of this my treating I'll explain,
foreign parts a tyrant king did reign,
prosecutor of the Christian faith,
s many good and holy writers saith.
His queen was young and beautiful also,
worldly pleasure they did overflow,
ne thing which most their comfort did destroy,
cause that they no issue could enjoy.
This king, who in vain idols did believe,
nt for his priests to pray she might conceive,
ay to our Gods, said he, that we may have
child, for this is all I need to crave.

AT length she was delivered of a son,
Which joyful tydings through the kingdom run
he sweetest child that ever eyes beheld,
/ith joy and gladness then the king was filled.
Four of them said, what shall we do, alas!
or thro' this child strange things will come to pass.
Therefore we must dissemble with our king,
\nd tell him it will be well in every thing.
Then from the king these wise men did depart,
le for the other sent, and said, thou art,

The wiſeſt man and therefore tell to me,
What you concerning of my child did ſee:
He ſaid, O king, thoſe men did flatter you,
What they have ſaid, indeed is nothing true
For in that fatal hour I did ſee.
Your child is born a chriſtian for to be.
Up firmly for the chriſtian faith he'll ſtand,
And all your prieſts he'll baniſh from the land,
Your golden gods he clearly will deſtroy,
Your days are mixt with grief inſtead of joy.
Hearing theſe words the king to weeping fell,
Saying, this is ſad news which here you tell,
My joys are turn'd to ſorrow, grief and woe,
Then how may I prevent it, let me know.
The wiſe philoſopher then ſaid, behold,
Your child muſt ſuck till he be three years old,
And build a famous palace in that ſpace,
That he may be ſecured in that place.
To wait on him, get twelve young virgins fair,
And ſome great knight to tutor him with care?
The word of God or Chriſt ne'er let him hear,
And thus let him be kept for fifteen years.
Should one of them fall ſick or chance to die,
Beſure you get another ſpeedily?
No death nor ſickneſs let him e'er perceive,
But all for ever live make him believe.
Then take him forth all pleaſures for to ſee,
And to ſome princeſs let him wedded be;
By this contrivance I'll aſſure you true,
Your child will be a comfort unto you.

THEN as the wiſe philoſopher had ſaid,
He caus'd a ſumptuous palace to be made,
And ſoon he got twelve virgins as we hear,
All aged from thirteen, unto twenty years.
When twelve long years were gone and paſt,
This Prince was then about fifteen years old;
He loved one virgin more than all the reſt,
To whom Jehoſhaphat did his mind expreſs.

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Why am I ſo confined, here I pray?
I long to ſee my father's palace gay:
And walk abroad to take the air likewiſe.
Why are thoſe things thus hidden from my eyes?
The damſel ſaid, then as her eyes did ſhow,
Your father will put me to death I know,
If I ſhould tell you, and if I refuſe,
Then I forever muſt your favour looſe.
Jehoſhaphat ſaid, ſpeak, be not afraid,
So then ſhe told him what the wiſe man ſaid,
And did unto the prince the cauſe relate,
Why he was kept confined at this rate.
Should you go forth the city for to ſee,
Your very heart with mirth will raviſhed be,
To view the court and famous building o'er,
This ſet the prince a longing more and more.
He ſaid unto Lionone, one thing I crave,
To ride abroad I may ſome freedom have,
The knight went to the king and got him leave,
Altho' the king in floods of tears did grieve.
The king ſet forth a proclamation then,
That blind and lame, and all deformed men,
Should then keep cloſe, when as the prince paſs thro'
But ſtrong and luſty ſhould appear in view.
Once more the tutor did the king acquaint,
The ſecond time to give his ſon content,
Setting his proclamation forth again,
So out they went with all their noble train.
The fields and gardens gave him great delight,
And ſinging birds his heart did much invite;
He was well pleaſed to view the parks moſt rare,
When evening came for home they did repair.
But now to drive of all thoſe pleaſures gay,
They met with two poor objects by the way,
One blind, the other full of leproſy,
Who for the ſake of God craved charity.
The Prince unto the tutor did ſay
What is the meaning tell me know I pray,
Of theſe ſtrange creatures, ſtrait the knight replies,
They are two men full of infirmities.

For by the cauſe of ſin, 'tis God's decree,
Some men are born afflicted for to be,
As blind or lame, ſuch things the Lord doth ſhow,
That all may praiſe his name and humbly bow.
Jehoſhaphat then ſaid, if this be true,
The like as well may fall on me and you,
The knight then ſaid God knoweſt that it may,
Jehoſophat then was filled with diſmay.
The tutor unto the king made known,
Your ſon is very melancholy grown;
Some ſport and paſtime therefore let him ſee,
In hopes his dropping heart may cheared be.
The king gave leave, the tutor once more came,
With many lords and barons of great fame
To ride a hunting, then they took their way,
In mirth they ſpent a pleaſant ſummer's day.
But riding home out of a cell appears,
A man whoſe age was near a hunred years,
Bald headed, toothleſs, hollow ey'd withall,
The palſy ſhook him, he could hardly craul.
Jehoſhaphat then ſaid, pray let me know,
What thing is this ſo ſtrange, and ſeems to go?
The knight ſaid, 'tis a man with age quite ſpent,
Ready to die, this made the Prince relent.
Pr. When muſt he die, O tell me know I pray?
Tu. No one but God can tell his dying day.
Pr. What muſt be done with him when he is dead?
Tu. Then under earth his body muſt be laid
Then ſaid the Prince, if that it muſt be ſo,
This is a vain deceitful world I know;
The pleaſures of it I'll no longer prize,
But have the thoughts of death before my eyes.
Now when the tutor theſe things had told,
The king did weep, and ſaid, my heart ſeems cold,
My child is come to ruin now, alas!
I fear the wiſe man's words will come to paſs.

BArlaam a chriſtian hermit, who had ſpent,
Long time in deſart places, God he ſent

An angel, who unto the hermit ſaith,
Go teach Jehoſhaphat the chriſtian faith.
Whate'er thou ſayeſt, he ſhall be rul'd by thee,
For God hath choſe Jehoſophat to be,
His faithful ſervant, guiltleſs of offence,
Tho' kept ſo long in wicked ignorance.
Then Barlaam came unto his palace brave,
To whom the porter ſaid, what would you have?
Said Barlaam I muſt ſpeak to your young prince,
The man at firſt denied him enterance.
I am a merchant now I tell to thee,
And brought a precious jewel here with me,
All other things this jewel does outvy,
For he that keeps the ſame ſhall never die.
The virtue of this jewel is ſo pure,
All manner of diſtempers it will cure,
If he were blind, 'twould give him perfect ſight,
If he were lame, 'twould make him walk upright.
When Barlaam came, the Prince then ſaid, let me ſee
The precious jewel you have brought for me;
Barlaam. You cannot ſee it with your outward ſight,
But muſt behold it with an inward light.
Then Prince Jehoſhaphat did midly ſay,
What do you mean by inward light I pray,
Barlaam the hermit made this anſwer then,
This jewel is the ſaviour of all men.
The gods you ſerve are devils I can tell,
And leading you the ready way to hell,
There's none to ſerve, but one true god of might
Hearken to me, and I will teach you right.
God made the heavens, lucifer firſt fell,
With many more down to the pit of hell,
For pride, and ſo they devils all became,
To be tormented in a burning flame.
Thoſe being fell the heavens were left bare,
So by that means the world created were,
In ſix days ſpace god did his work fulfill,
And made all things according to his will.
Man being made well pleaſing to God's ſight,
The devil was inraged with wrath and ſpight,

Cauſe he himſelf can in no pleaſure dwell,
He fain would draw all ſouls to him in hell.
The devil's ſnare firſt cauſed Adam's fall,
Which was the cauſe that mankind ſinned all;
And ſo the world became filthy and vain,
But by Chriſt's death it was reſtor'd again.
When Barlaam had explain'd the ſcriptures o'er
The Prince increas'd in learning more and more,
He ſaid, I will believe, and bear in mind,
My Chriſt that dy'd for me, and all mankind.

LIonone finding what would come to paſs,
He ſmote upon his breaſt, and cry'd alas,
What anſwer ſhall I make my ſovereign Lord,
Death without mercy ſhall be my reward.
Then he a rope about his neck did fling,
And in this manner went before the king:
There kneeling down he made a courteous bow,
The king reply'd ſir, what's the matter now.
What, art thou mad, Lionone, tell me true,
That you appear ſo ſtrangely in my view:
Lionone trembled and made this reply,
O hang me up, for I deſerve to die.
I do deſerve no mercy for my ſhare,
You left your ſon under my charge and care,
To tutor him the way that is moſt right,
But now alas! your ſon is ruin'd quite.
For by a falſe deceitful man's advice,
Who ſaid he had a jewel of great price,
By his ſly ways I fell into a ſnare,
He's made your ſon a chriſtian I declare.
Riſe up Lionone, then reply'd the king,
I will not execute you for this thing;
Thou may'ſt be ſure no harm ſhall come to thee,
But on my ſon revenged I will be.
So ſending for his ſon, theſe words he ſaid,
Haſt thou my laws and counſel diſobey'd,
If it be true what I have heard of thee,
Then by my honour thou deſtroy'd ſhall be.

I have been told thou art a chriſtian turn'd,
If it be ſo, 'tis fit thou ſhould be burned;
Thou ſhalt not live to overcome my land,
The truth of this now let me underſtand.
Father, I am a chriſtian to be plain,
That holy faith I ever will maintain,
To ſuffer death I will be very free,
For my dear Chriſt that ſhed his blood for me.
Then did he give his ſon ſad kicks and blows,
'Till blood guſht out both from his mouth and noſe,
I thank you father then reply'd the ſon,
It is God's will to me it ſhould be done.
My Saviour Chriſt with many ſtripes was beat,
And to the croſs they nail'd his hands and feet.
To bear your blows with patience I'm free,
I cannot bear what Chriſt hath bore for me.
To find out Barlaam, then we underſtand,
He ſent a proclamation through the land.
That man by whom this hermit may be found,
Should have for his reward a hundred pounds.
Long time they ſought him, but 'twas all in vain,
He thought to take his life and have him ſlain,
His council ſaid, your ſon pray do not ſlay,
And we will put you in a better way.
Nicor reſembles Barlaam in his face,
Let him be brought before his royal grace.
He'll think 'tis Barlaam, therefore Nicor muſt,
Tell him the heathen way is good and juſt.
So ſoon as Nicor to the court was brought,
The Prince was fill'd with a jealous thought;
It was not Barlaam, ſometimes he thought it was,
Then he began to plead the heathens cauſe.
The Prince before them all, ſaid wicked elf,
What art thou come to plead againſt thyſelf?
Except thou do'ſt the chriſtian faith maintain,
This very day by me thou ſhalt be ſlain.
Remember David, God's anointed king,
Who ſlew the proud Philiſtians with a ſling:
If thou art ne'er ſo ſtrong, aſſur'd I be,
Into my hands God will deliver thee.

Said Nicor I was ſent you to deceive,
The devil brought me here, I do believe:
I am not Barlaam, Nicor is my name,
Brought up a heathen, lord the more's my ſhame.
No more I'll be a heathen for my part,
But ſerve the chriſtian God with my whole heart,
The pagans down their heathen books did fling,
And burnt their gods in preſence of the king.

SEeing theſe things the king aloud did cry,
O what a wretched ſinful man am I?
Againſt the holy word of truth to fight;
I find the chriſtian faith is pure and right.
Againſt that faith I will no longer hold,
O bleſſed be the wiſe man that foretold,
What was decreed at thy ſweet righteous birth,
The bleſſed child that e'er was born on earth.
Churches were built, the land became divine,
Then did the righteous goſpel ſpread and ſhine,
The poor confined chriſtians were ſet free,
In chriſtian love the land did ſoon agree.
Death call'd the king down to his ſilent tomb,
Jehoſhaphat reign'd in his father's room,
And was by all his ſubjects dearly lov'd,
Becauſe the word of Chriſt was well approv'd.
Thus for ſometime he did the faith defend,
But in that land his life he did not end:
But to Alfanes did his throne reſign,
That he might keep it holy and divine.
For fear that worldly pleaſures which are vain,
By any ways ſhould draw him back again,
To ſeek out Barlaam to be ſatisfied;
In loneſome deſerts he with hermits dy'd.
The people grieved for loſs of their good Prince,
That good Alfanes ſtood in the defence,
Of the true faith, which is divine and pure,
And ever ſhall from age to age endure.

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